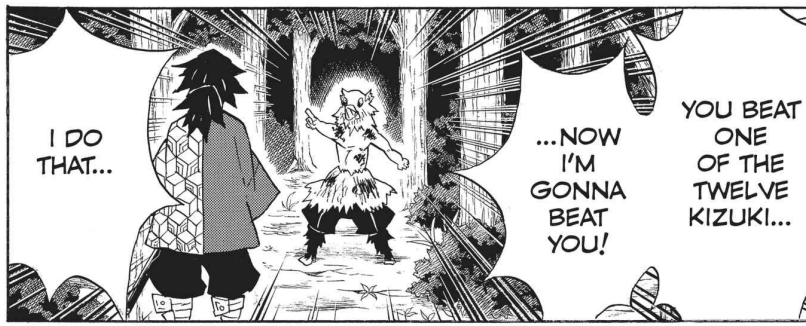
CHAPTER 38: REAL AND FAKE




...
HEY! YOU IN THE TWO-TONE JACKET! FIGHT ME!


I DO THAT...
...NOW I'M GONNA BEAT YOU!
YOU BEAT ONE OF THE TWELVE KIZUKI...

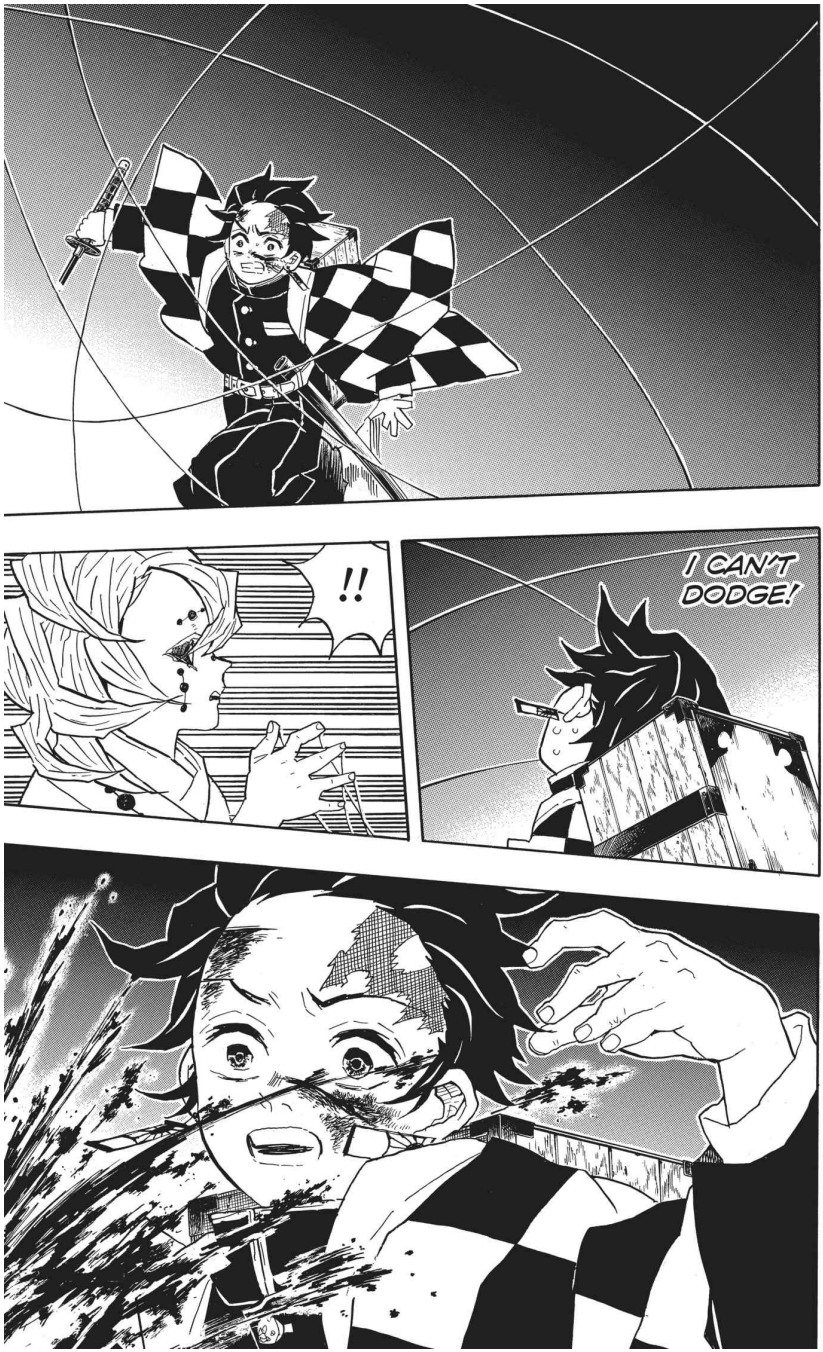

...AND I GET PROMOTED! THAT'S HOW IT WORKS!
FWIP
FWUP


YOU'D DO BETTER TO GET BACK TO YOUR TRAINING, FOOL!
WHAAAAT?!
FWIP
FWIP
THAT WASN'T ONE OF THE TWELVE KIZUKI.
EVEN YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT.
I JUST REPEATED WHAT HE TOLD ME!
IT WAS TANJIRO WHO SAID THAT WAS ONE OF THE TWELVE KIZUKI!
I DID KNOW THAT!


?!
?!
?!
WHAT'S THE...? HE TIED ME UP?!
WHA ...?!
PAT PAT
TP TP
HE'S SO FAST!
HEY! WAIT! GRAAH!
SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T EVEN KNOW THE EXTENT OF HIS OWN INJURIES HAS NO PLACE IN BATTLE.
I CAN'T HEAR YOU!
YOU WALK TOO FAST!


SWISH
MY KATANA BROKE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THE WEBS THIS KID WIELDS...
...ARE EVEN STRONGER THAN THE BODY OF THAT DEMON I COULDN'T CUT EARLIER!


BECAUSE OF MY INEXPERIENCE I BROKE MY SWORD.
FORGIVE ME, UROKODAKI AND HAGANEZUKA...
I CAN'T CUT THE THREADS, BUT IF I GET WITHIN REACH...
NO, NO TIME FOR THAT! THINK, THINK!
FWUP
IMPOSSIBLE!
I CAN'T GET THROUGH. THOSE WEBS MOVE LIKE THEY'RE ALIVE!
HE'S HOLDING BACK SO AS NOT TO KILL ME, BUT I'M STILL STRUGGLING!


!!
I CAN'T DODGE!




NEZUKO!
TMP
TMP
TMP
FWMP
NEZUKO... NEZUKO!
YOU PROTECTED ME! I'M SORRY!
...
BUT SHE SEEMS TO BE A DEMON!
THE GIRL WAS IN THE BOX HE CARRIES.


SHAKE
QUIVER
SHAKE
SO WHAT IF WE ARE?!
WHOO
C'MON, HEAL UP! QUICK!
SUCH DEEP WOUNDS! HER HAND COULD COME OFF!
YOU ARE BROTHER AND SISTER?

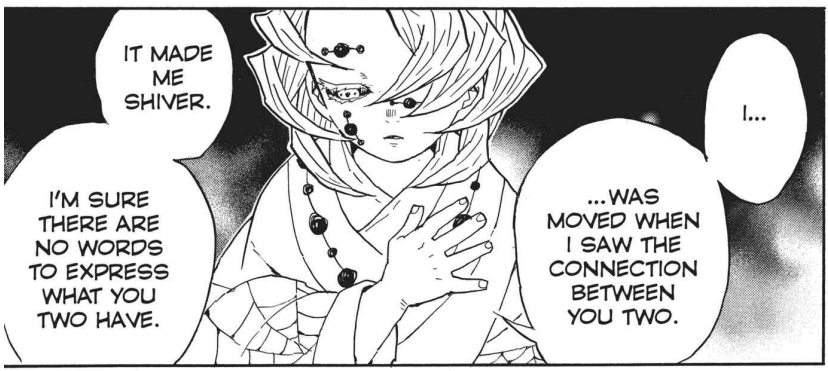

HIS SISTER PROTECTED HIM...
...BY LEAPING IN THE WAY.
HIS SISTER IS A DEMON ...
...BUT HE IS WITH HER.
R...
RUI ...
SIB-LINGS ...
SIB-LINGS ...
THAT'S WHAT I WANT!
THEIRS IS A TRUE FAMILY BOND!
DON'T ABANDON ME!
PLEASE, WAIT!
I'M YOUR ELDER SISTER!
W...
!
WAIT!

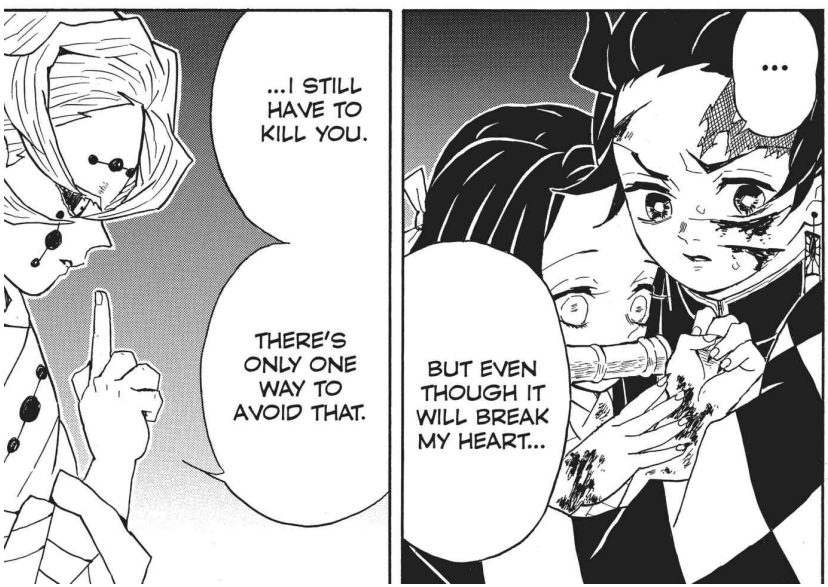

SHUT UP!!
POP

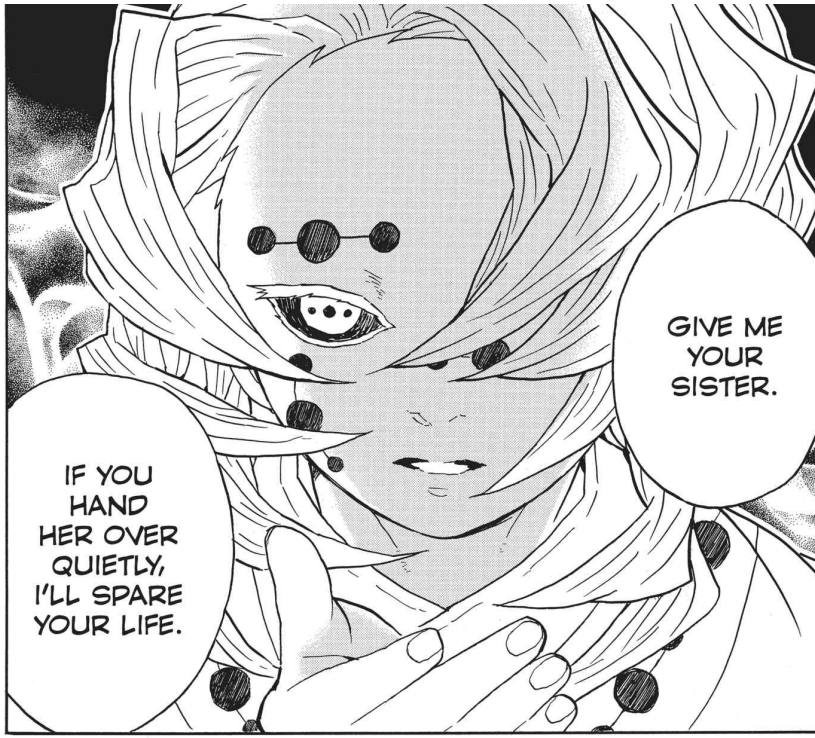

KRIK
IN THE END, YOU NEVER FULFILLED YOUR ROLES... NOT ONCE...
?!
...
THEN KILL THOSE PEOPLE WANDERING AROUND THE MOUNTAIN.
I WAS YOUR ELDER SISTER! YOU SAID SO!
LET ME MAKE IT UP TO YOU!
W...
WAIT...

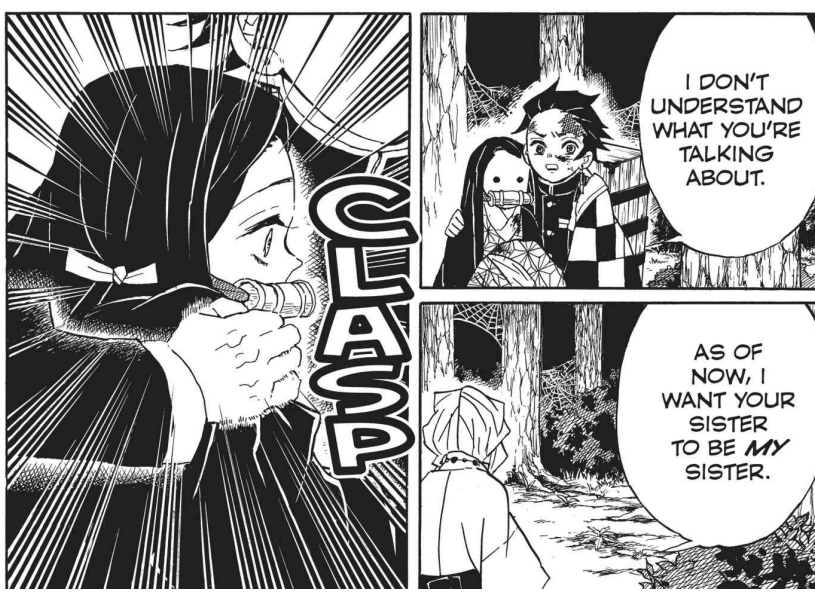

I...
I UNDERSTAND. I'LL KILL THEM.
IF YOU DO, THEN I'LL FORGIVE ALL YOUR SHORTCOMINGS.
TMP
TMP
BOY...
...LET'S TALK.


TALK ?!


I...
...WAS MOVED WHEN I SAW THE CONNECTION BETWEEN YOU TWO.
IT MADE ME SHIVER.
I'M SURE THERE ARE NO WORDS TO EXPRESS WHAT YOU TWO HAVE.

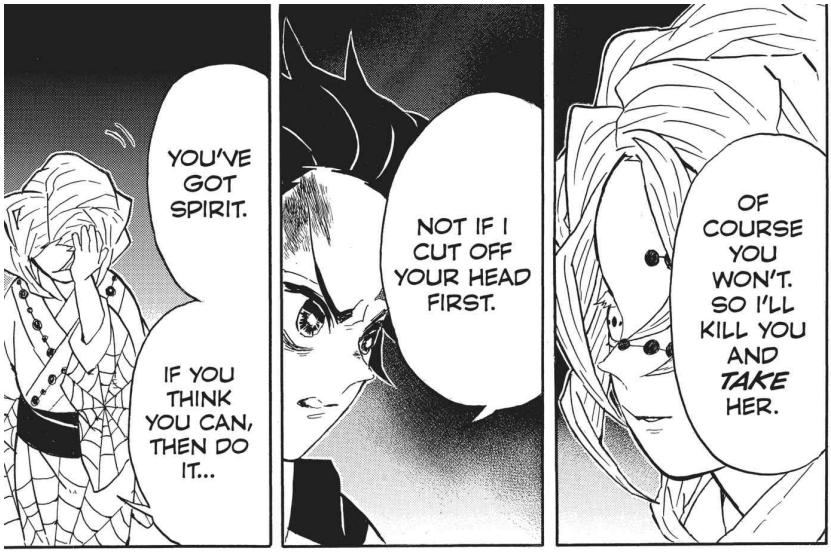

...
BUT EVEN THOUGH IT WILL BREAK MY HEART...
...I STILL HAVE TO KILL YOU.
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO AVOID THAT.

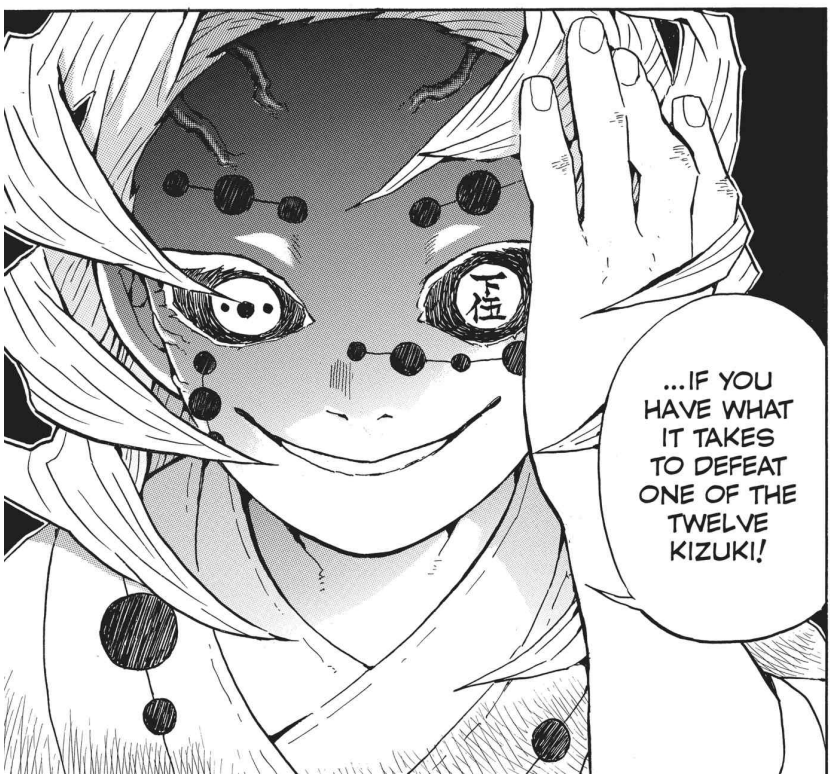

GIVE ME YOUR SISTER.
IF YOU HAND HER OVER QUIETLY, I'LL SPARE YOUR LIFE.


CLASP
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
AS OF NOW, I WANT YOUR SISTER TO BE MY SISTER.

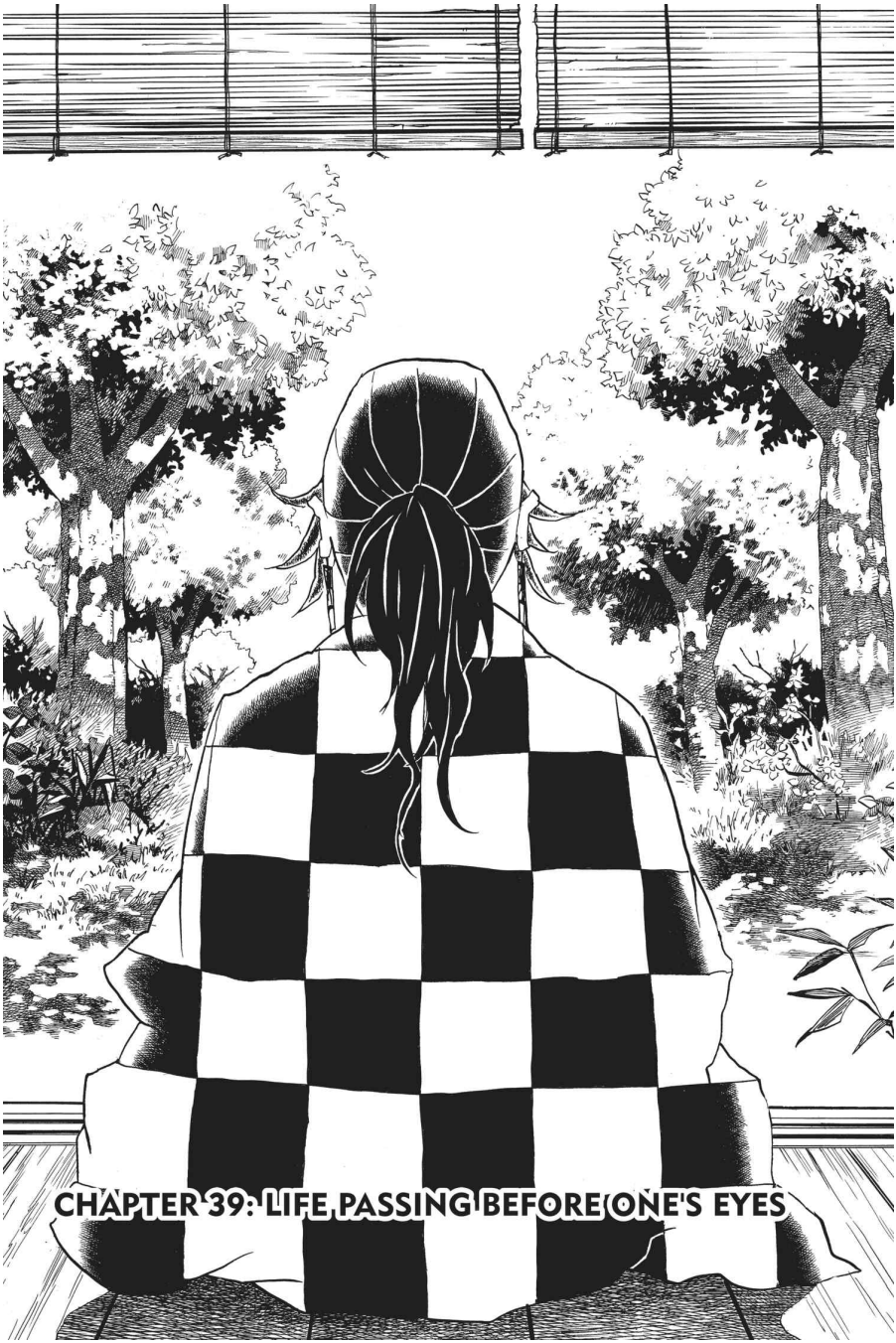

IT'S ALL RIGHT. DON'T WORRY. I'LL FORGE A BOND. I'M STRONGER...
...SO IT WILL START AS A BOND OF FEAR. SHE'LL KNOW...
...WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HER IF SHE DISOBEYS.
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN ACCEPT THAT!
BESIDES, NEZUKO ISN'T A *THING*! SHE HAS FEELINGS AND FREE WILL!
SHE WON'T BE YOUR SISTER!

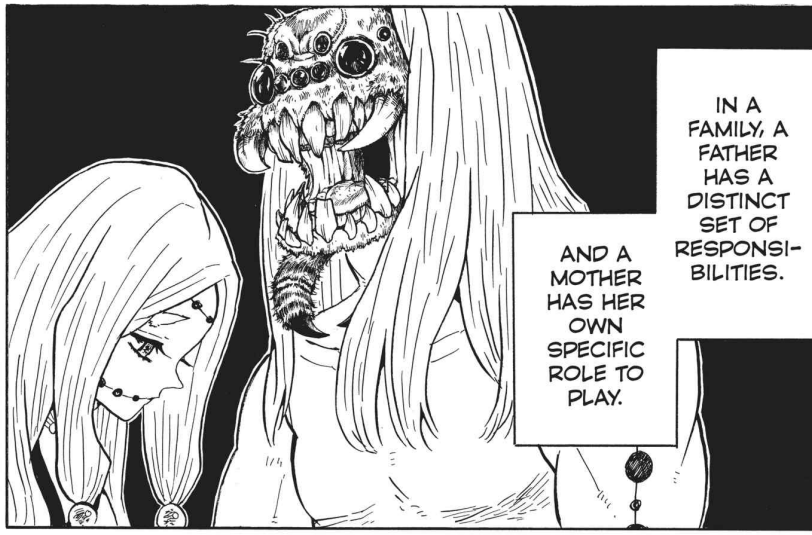

ARE YOU INSANE? USING FEAR...
AS LONG AS YOU THINK LIKE THAT, YOU'LL NEVER GET WHAT YOU WANT!
...TO BIND SOMEONE IS NOTHING LIKE A FAMILIAL TIE!
TMP
I'LL NEVER GIVE NEZUKO TO YOU!
I DON'T LIKE YOU.
YOU'RE SO LOUD. IT'S VERY ANNOYING.

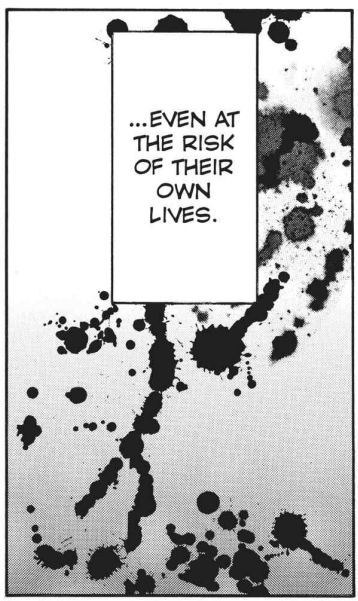

YOU'VE GOT SPIRIT.
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN, THEN DO IT...
NOT IF I CUT OFF YOUR HEAD FIRST.
OF COURSE YOU WON'T. SO I'LL KILL YOU AND *TAKE* HER.

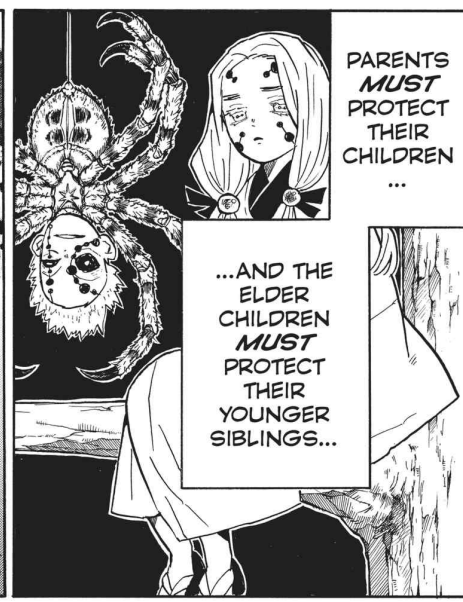

下伍
...IF YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO DEFEAT ONE OF THE TWELVE KIZUKI!

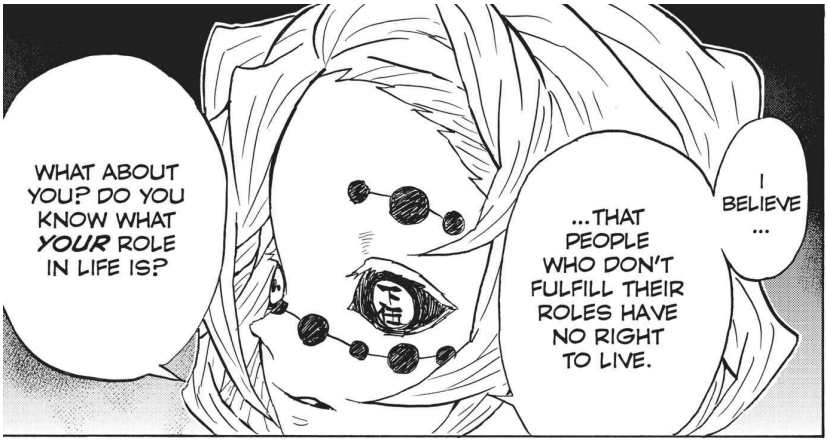


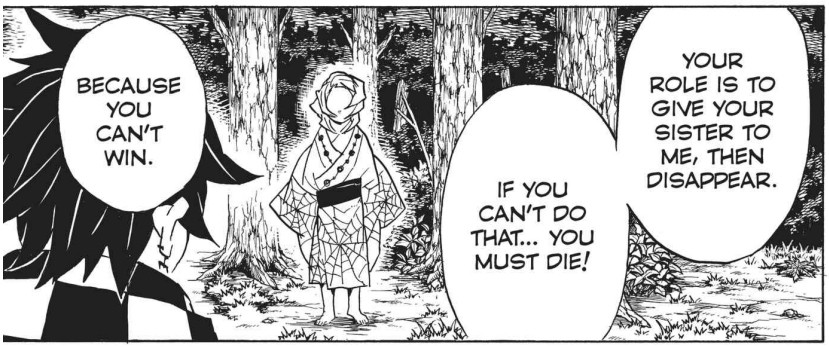

CHAPTER 39: LIFE PASSING BEFORE ONE'S EYES

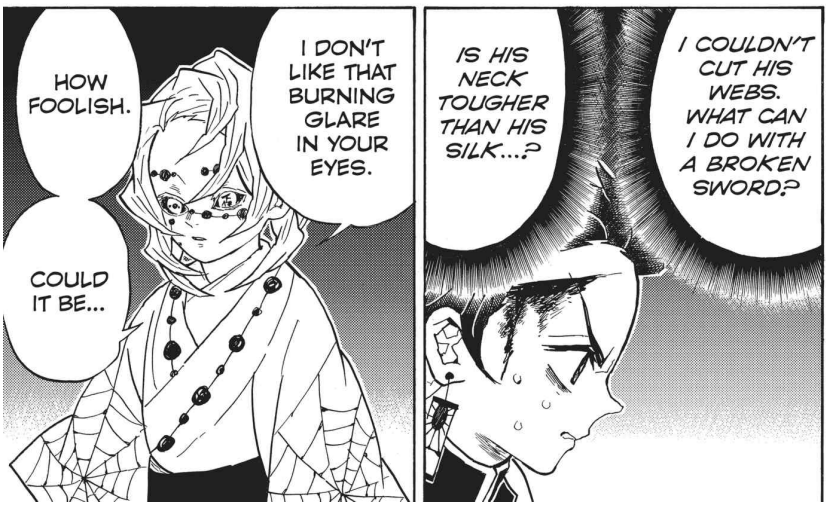

IN A FAMILY, A FATHER HAS A DISTINCT SET OF RESPONSI-BILITIES.
AND A MOTHER HAS HER OWN SPECIFIC ROLE TO PLAY.


...EVEN AT THE RISK OF THEIR OWN LIVES.

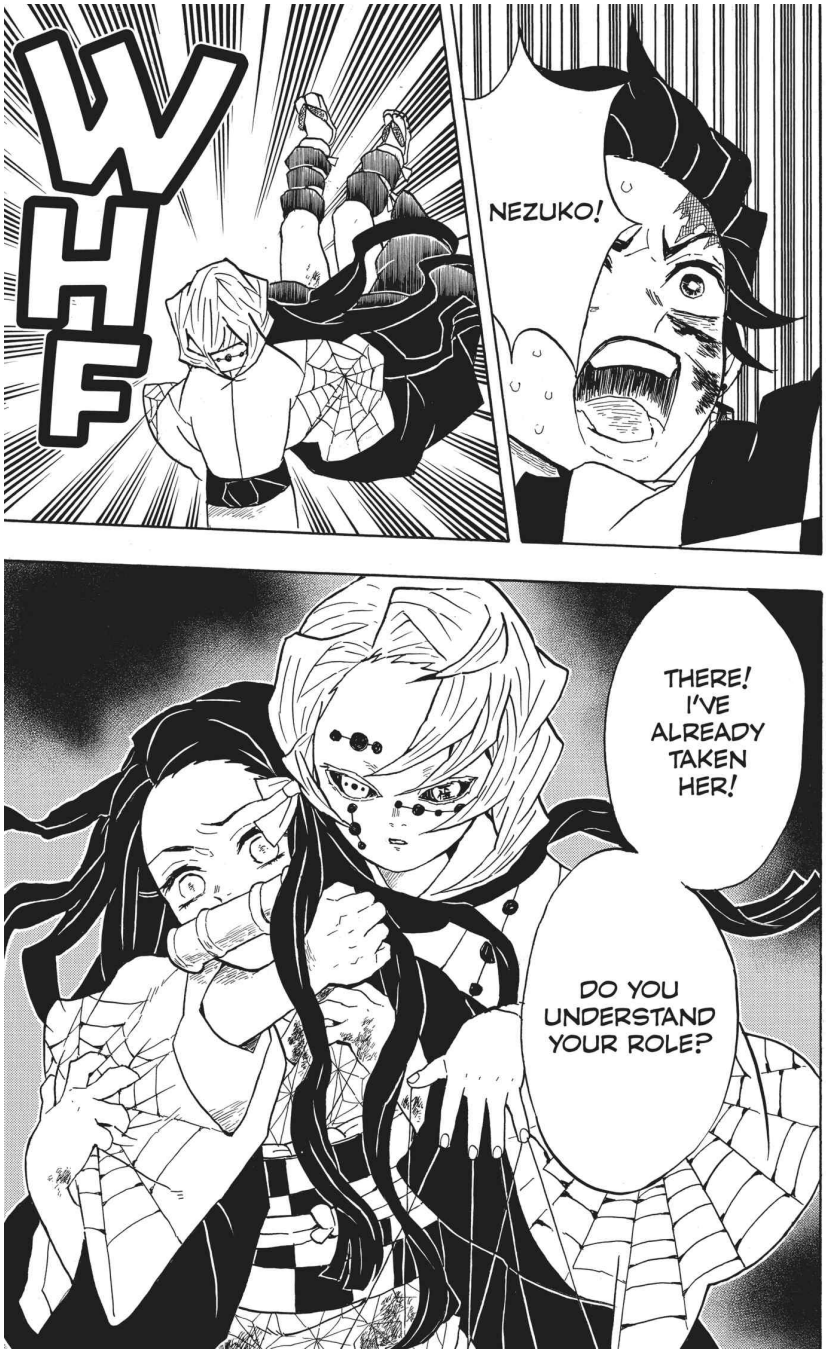

PARENTS *MUST* PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN ...
...AND THE ELDER CHILDREN *MUST* PROTECT THEIR YOUNGER SIBLINGS...


I BELIEVE ...
...THAT PEOPLE WHO DON'T FULFILL THEIR ROLES HAVE NO RIGHT TO LIVE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? DO YOU KNOW WHAT *YOUR* ROLE IN LIFE IS?


YOUR ROLE IS TO GIVE YOUR SISTER TO ME, THEN DISAPPEAR.
IF YOU CAN'T DO THAT... YOU MUST DIE!
BECAUSE YOU CAN'T WIN.


I COULDN'T CUT HIS WEBS. WHAT CAN I DO WITH A BROKEN SWORD?
IS HIS NECK TOUGHER THAN HIS SILK...?
I DON'T LIKE THAT BURNING GLARE IN YOUR EYES.
HOW FOOLISH.
COULD IT BE...

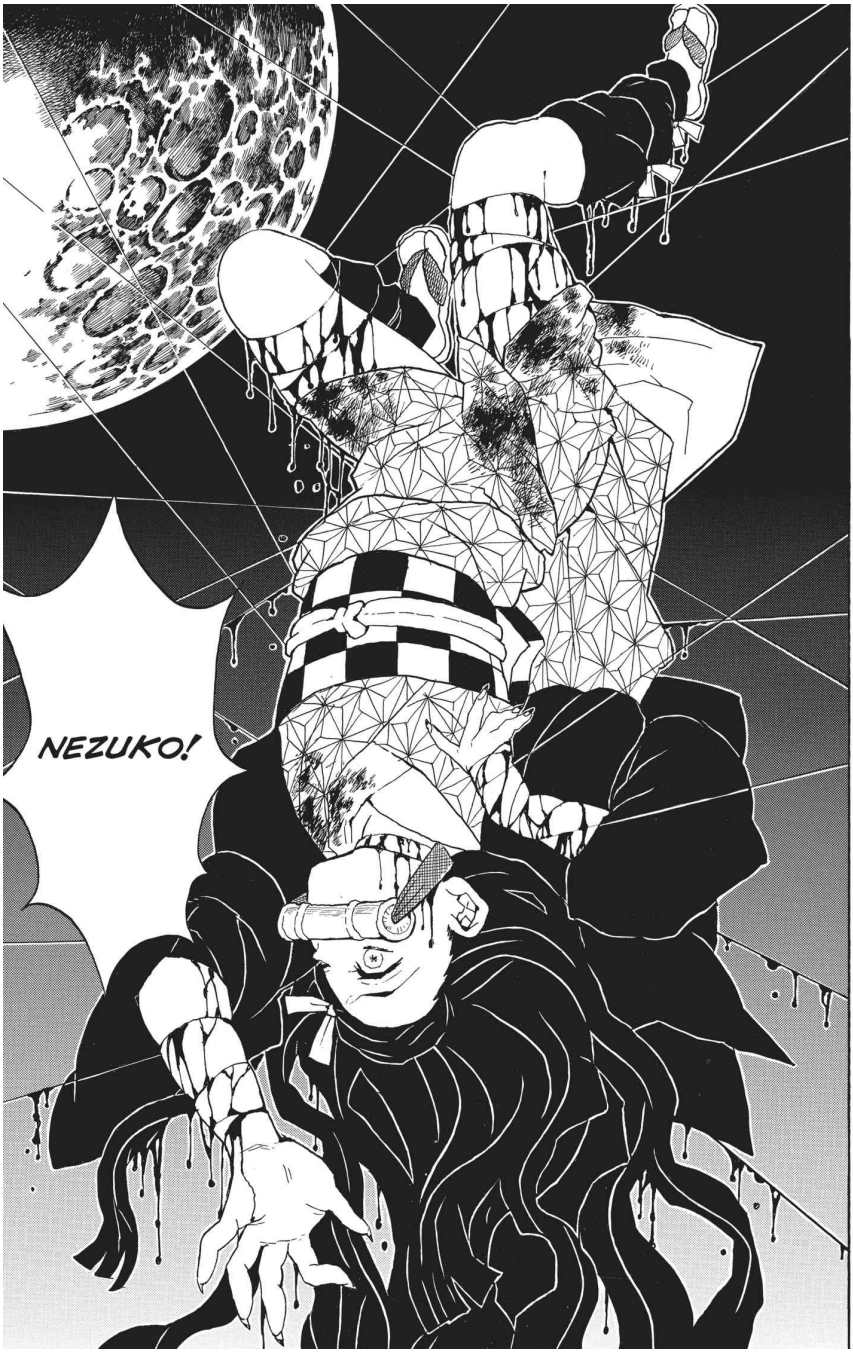

...THAT YOU THINK YOU CAN WIN?!


WHF
NEZUKO!
THERE! I'VE ALREADY TAKEN HER!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE?

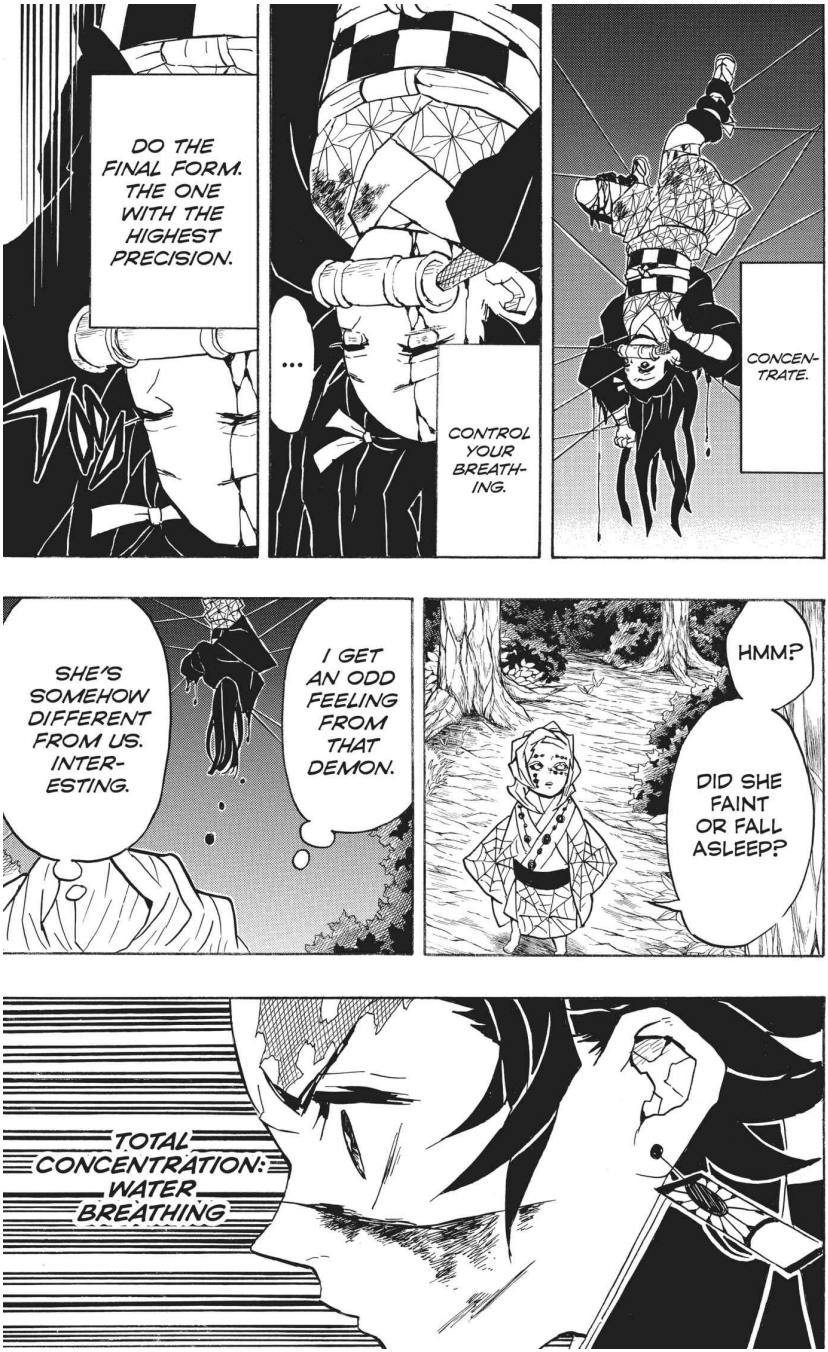

DASH
LET HER GO!
GWN
I TOLD YOU, GIVE HER TO ME AND I'LL SPARE YOUR LIFE. BUT...
SLA
SH
下伍


TMP TMD
!
TNNG
ZWSH


?!
WHERE'S NEZUKO?
FWMP
PLOP
NE—


NEZUKO!

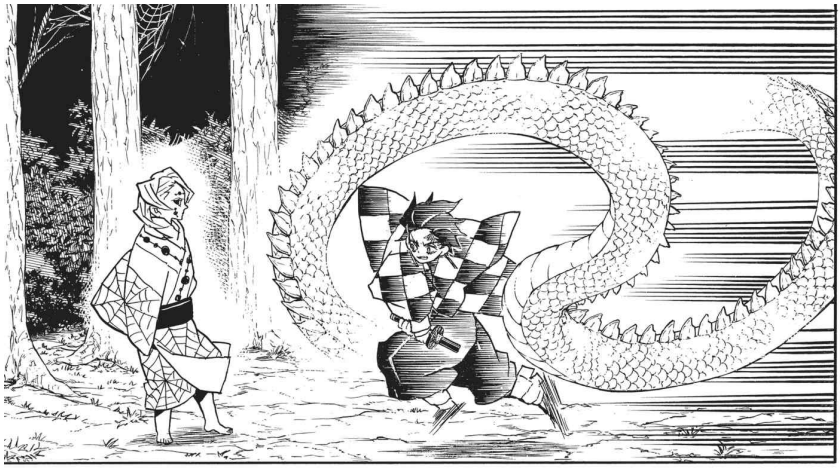

CEASE YOUR SCREECHING. THAT WON'T KILL HER— SHE'S A DEMON!
BUT SHE MUST LEARN HER NEW ROLE, SO...
...I'LL LET HER BLEED FOR A WHILE.
IF SHE STILL WON'T OBEY, I'LL LEAVE HER LIKE THAT UNTIL SUNRISE...
...AND LET HER GET A BIT SCORCHED.
SWOO
STAY CALM...
DON'T GET EMO-TIONAL.
B-DMP
B-DMP
B-DMP
SHF


DO THE FINAL FORM. THE ONE WITH THE HIGHEST PRECISION.
...
CONTROL YOUR BREATHING.
CONCENTRATE.
SHE'S SOMEHOW DIFFERENT FROM US. INTERESTING.
I GET AN ODD FEELING FROM THAT DEMON.
HMM?
DID SHE FAINT OR FALL ASLEEP?
TOTAL CONCENTRATION: WATER BREATHING

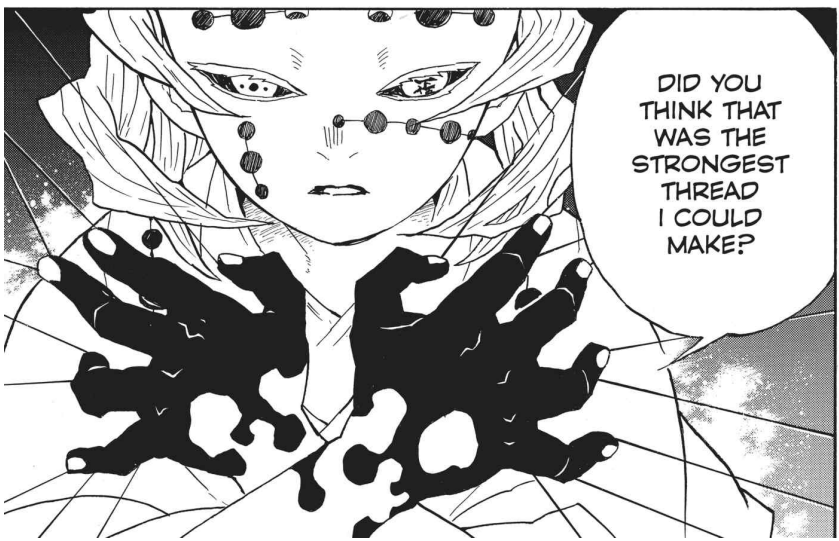

CONSTANT
FLUX!


CONSTANT FLUX. IN THIS TECHNIQUE I SPIN LIKE A WRITHING DRAGON...
SWP
!
SWD
...MAKING A SERIES OF STRIKES...
TM
...THE SECOND BLOW STRONGER THAN THE FIRST...
W
SH
...AND THE THIRD STRONGER THAN THE SECOND...
P
W
SH
...AND THE FOURTH STRONGER YET!
EACH TIME I SPIN...

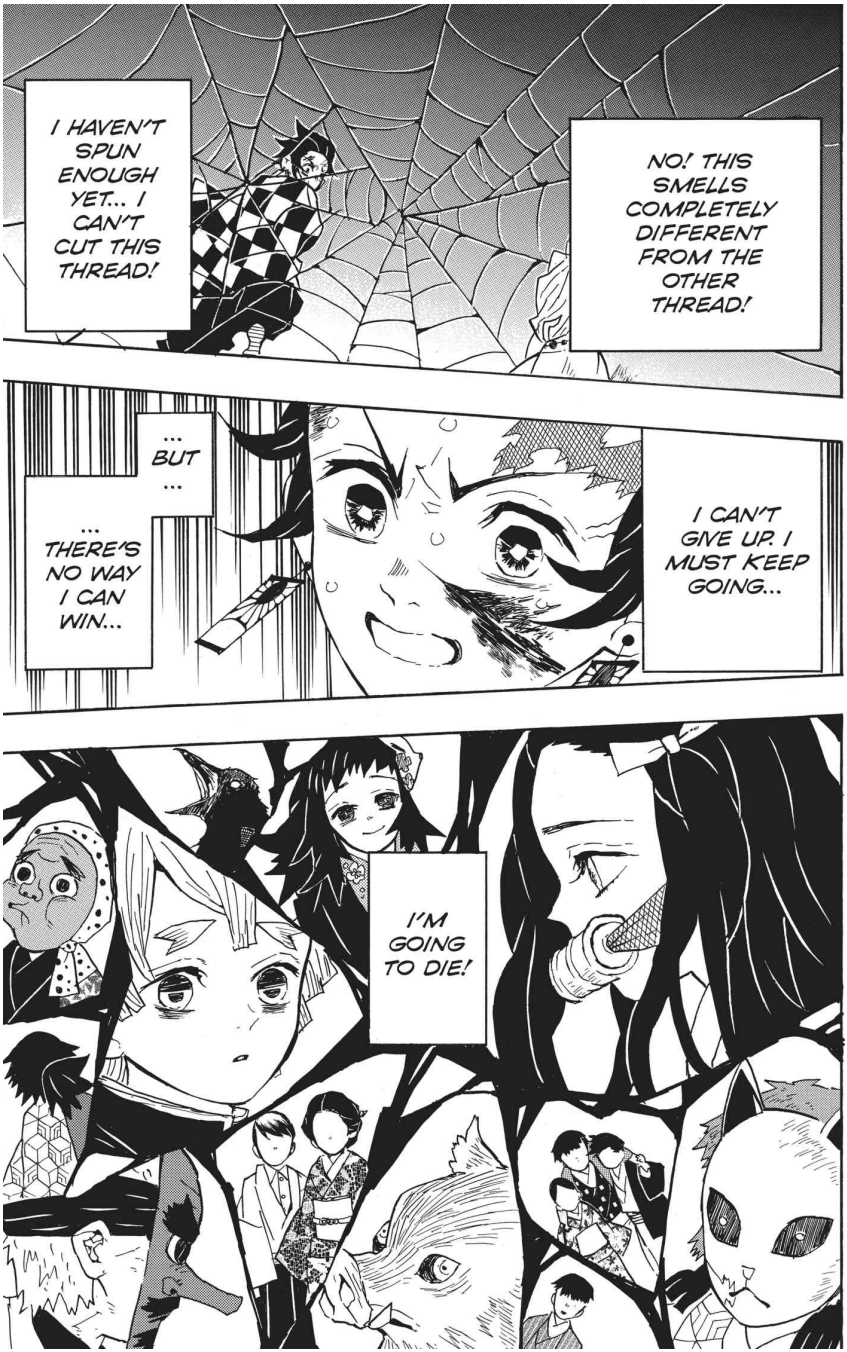

SLA
SH
...THE BLOW GETS STRONGER.
下伍
I CUT IT! IF I KEEP GOING...
...I CAN WIN!

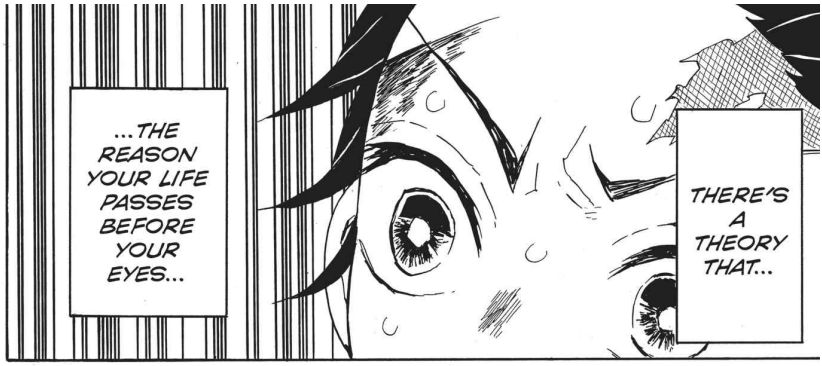



OH...
VWOO

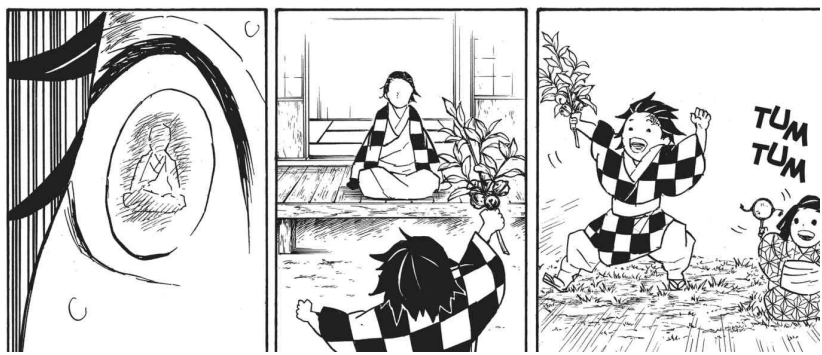

DID YOU THINK THAT WAS THE STRONGEST THREAD I COULD MAKE?


DEMON BLOOD ART: CUTTING THREAD CAGE
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU.
GOOD-BYE.


I HAVEN'T SPUN ENOUGH YET... I CAN'T CUT THIS THREAD!
NO! THIS SMELLS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER THREAD!
... BUT ...
... THERE'S NO WAY I CAN WIN...
I CAN'T GIVE UP. I MUST KEEP GOING...
I'M GOING TO DIE!


...THE REASON YOUR LIFE PASSES BEFORE YOUR EYES...
THERE'S A THEORY THAT...


...IS TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO SEARCH ALL YOUR EXPERIENCES AND MEMORIES TO FIND...
...JUST BEFORE DEATH...
...A WAY TO ESCAPE!


TUM TUM


FATHER!
BECOME LIKE HINOKAMI.
TANJIRO, YOUR BREATHING. CONTROL YOUR BREATHING.
GASP




CHAPTER 40: HINOKAMI


LOOK, TANJIRO...
YOUR FATHER IS DOING A *KAGURA* DANCE.
OUR FAMILY WORKS WITH FIRE...
...SO IN ORDER TO KEEP US SAFE...
...WE OFFER A DANCE AND PRAYERS TO HINOKAMI, THE FIRE GOD, AT THE START OF EACH YEAR.
STOMP
KLANG
STOMP


I BET MY LUNGS WOULD FREEZE!
HOW DO YOU DO IT DAD? HOW CAN YOU DANCE FOR SO LONG OUT IN THE SNOW?

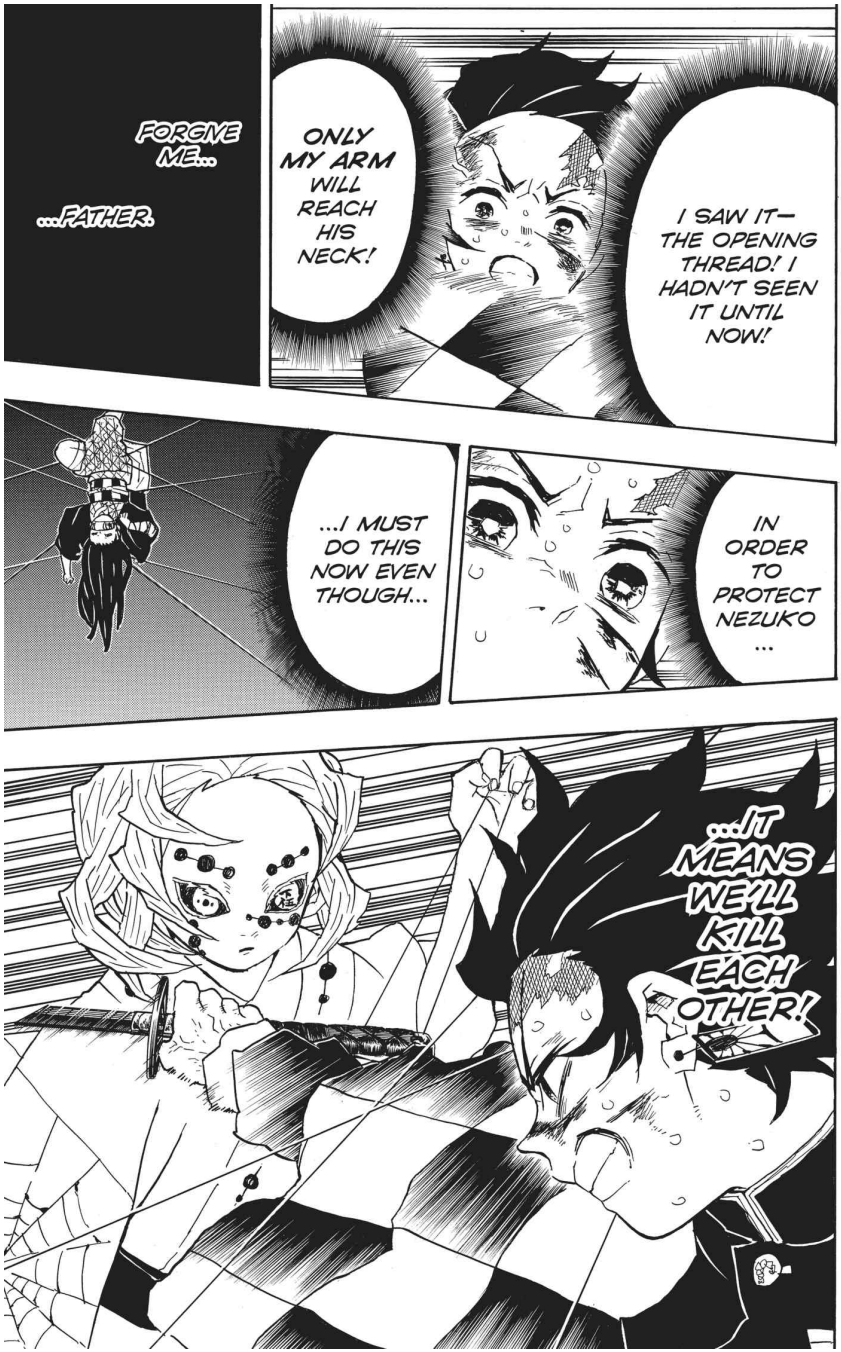

...THAT LETS YOU NEVER GET TIRED NO MATTER HOW LONG YOU MOVE.
THERE'S A SPECIAL WAY OF BREATHING ...
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DANCE FOREVER TOO!
IF YOU LEARN HOW TO BREATHE PROPERLY, TANJIRO, YOU'LL BE FINE OUT IN THE COLD.

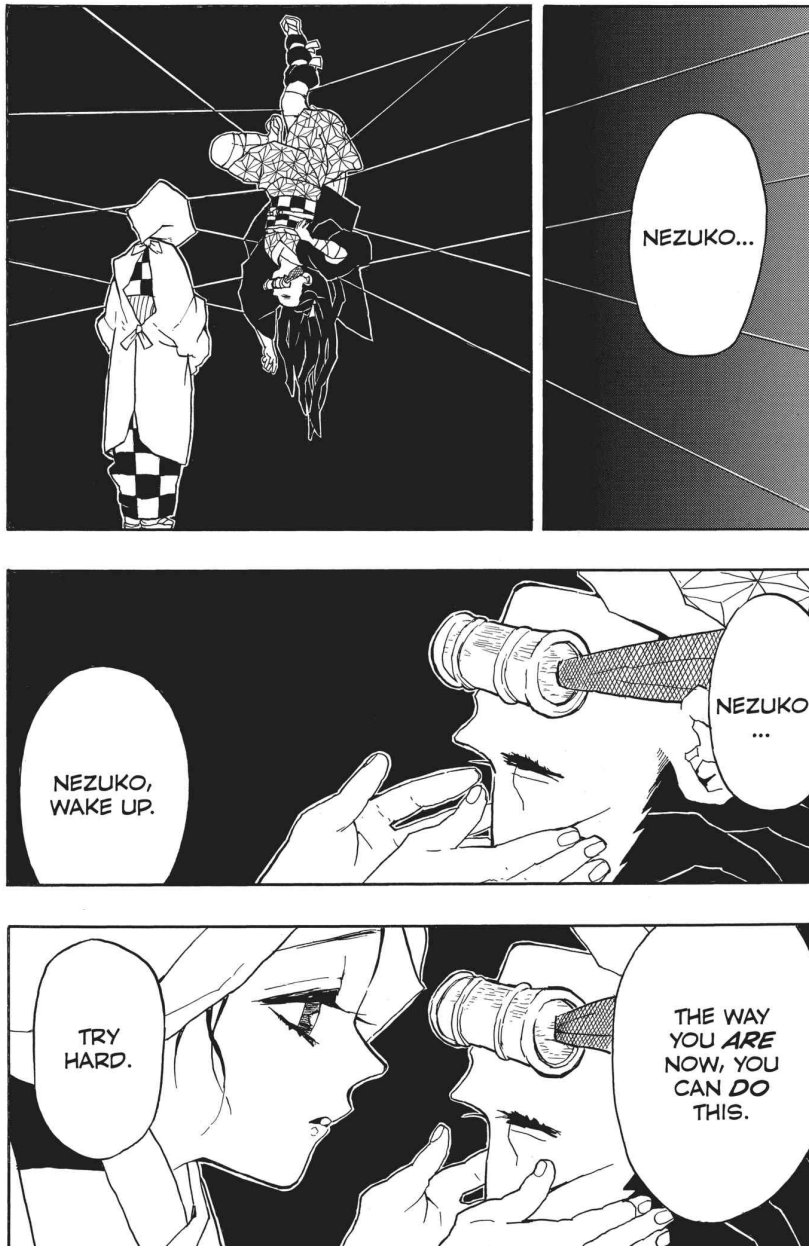

TANJIRO, BE SURE YOU HAVE THESE EARRINGS WHEN IT'S TIME TO DO THE KAGURA!
WEAR THEM ALWAYS SO YOU DON'T LOSE THEM.
PROMISE ME!
GASP


HINOKAMI
KAGURA
DANCE!


WHO
GNN

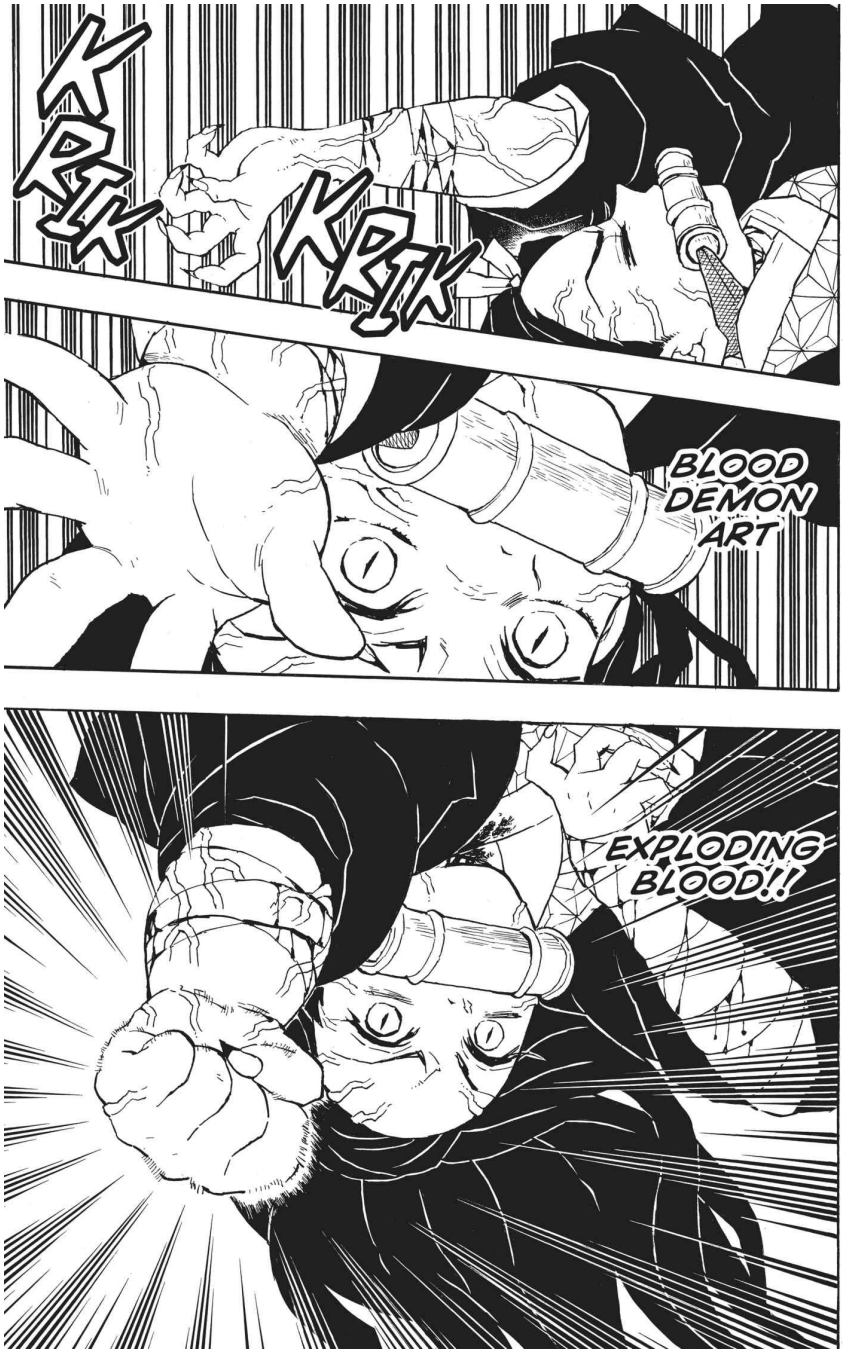

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE HE MADE NEW ONES!
THE THREADS MOVE LIKE THEY'RE ALIVE!
I'M GOING TO PAY FOR SWITCHING FROM WATER BREATHING TO HINOKAMI KAGURA BREATHING.
I CAN'T PULL BACK EVEN FOR A MOMENT!
SNIFF
IN A MOMENT, I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO MOVE!
PING


FORGIVE ME...
...FATHER.
ONLY MY ARM WILL REACH HIS NECK!
I SAW IT— THE OPENING THREAD! I HADN'T SEEN IT UNTIL NOW!
...I MUST DO THIS NOW EVEN THOUGH...
IN ORDER TO PROTECT NEZUKO ...
...IT MEANS WE'LL KILL EACH OTHER!


NEZUKO...
NEZUKO, WAKE UP.
NEZUKO ...
TRY HARD.
THE WAY YOU *ARE* NOW, YOU CAN *DO* THIS.


NEZUKO
...
...IF YOU DON'T, YOUR BROTHER WILL DIE.




KRK
KRK
BLOOD DEMON ART
EXPLODING BLOOD!!


BOOM
?!
FIRE ON THE THREAD!


TO BLOCK HIM, RUI INSTINCTIVELY USED THE SAME THREAD THAT WAS STRINGING UP NEZUKO.
TANJIRO'S COUNTER-ATTACK WAS UNEXPECTED, ESPECIALLY SINCE RUI WAS ABOUT TO KILL HIM IN ONE BLOW.
FLAM-MABLE DEMON BLOOD WITH...
...AN EXPLO-SIVE SUPER-NATURAL QUALITY.
NEZUKO'S BLOOD STAINED THAT THREAD.
FOOT


TNK TNK TNK
IMPOSSIBLE!
MY THREADS BURNED AWAY!


CHOK
MY BODY IS EVEN STRONGER THAN MY THREADS.
HE SEVERED MY THREADS, BUT HE CANNOT CUT MY NECK.
...A SPLASH OF HER BLOOD STRUCK HIS KATANA.
WHEN NEZUKO USED HER BODY TO COVER TANJIRO...


NEZUKO'S BLOOD EXPLODED...
BLOOD
...FORWARD.
...PUSHING TANJIRO'S NICHIRIN SWORD...
NO ONE CAN BREAK THE BOND...
...THAT NEZUKO AND I SHARE!

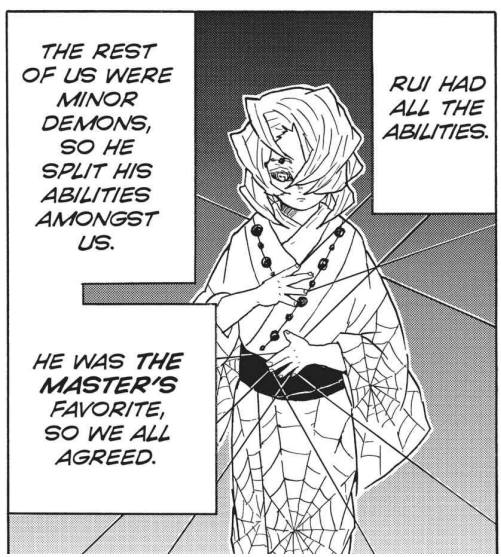




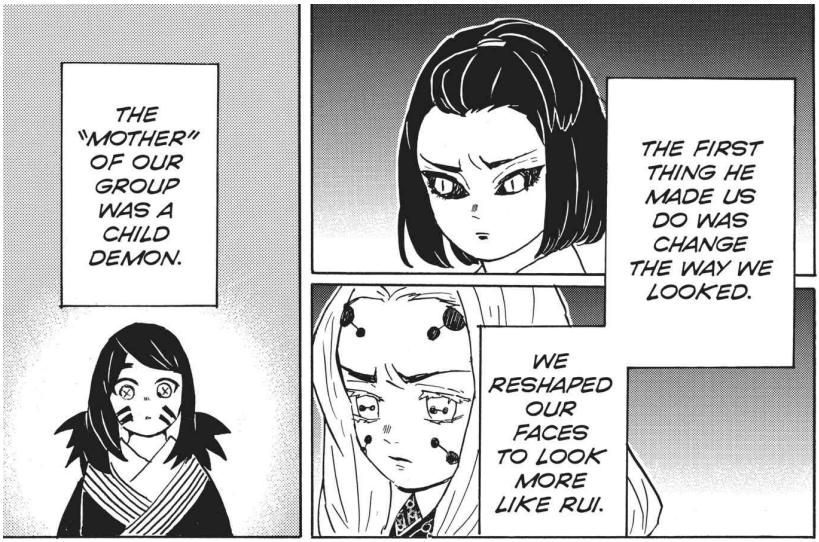

CHAPTER 41:
SHINOBU KOCHO

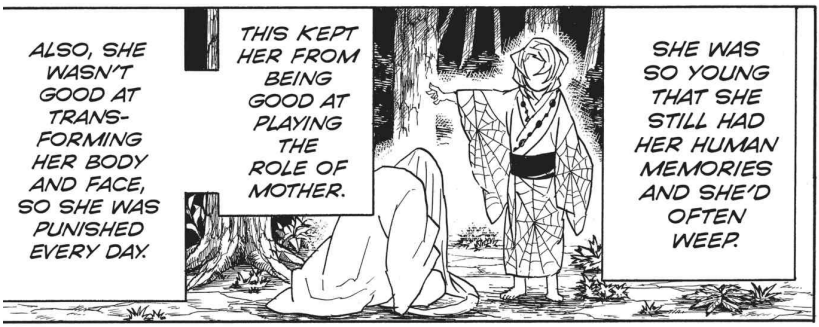

ZSH ZSH ZSH
EVEN THOUGH I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO NEVER MESSES UP!
I MESSED UP! I REALLY MESSED UP!

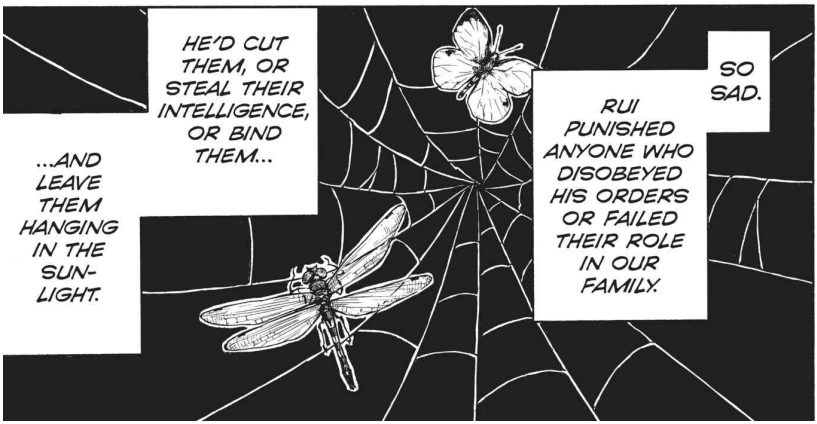

...OUR PRETEND FAMILY!
I RUINED...

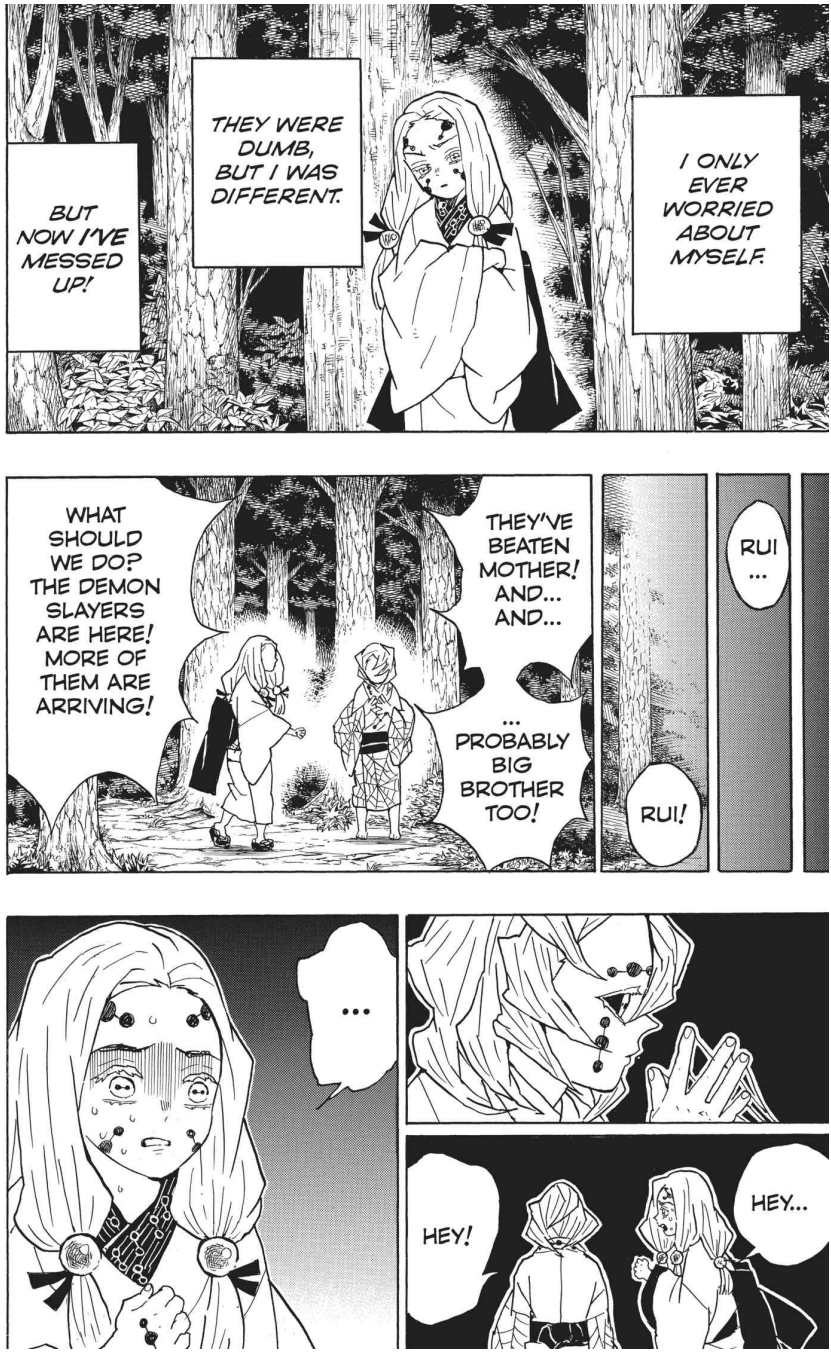

THE REST OF US WERE MINOR DEMONS, SO HE SPLIT HIS ABILITIES AMONGST US.
RUI HAD ALL THE ABILITIES.
HE WAS THE MASTER'S FAVORITE, SO WE ALL AGREED.

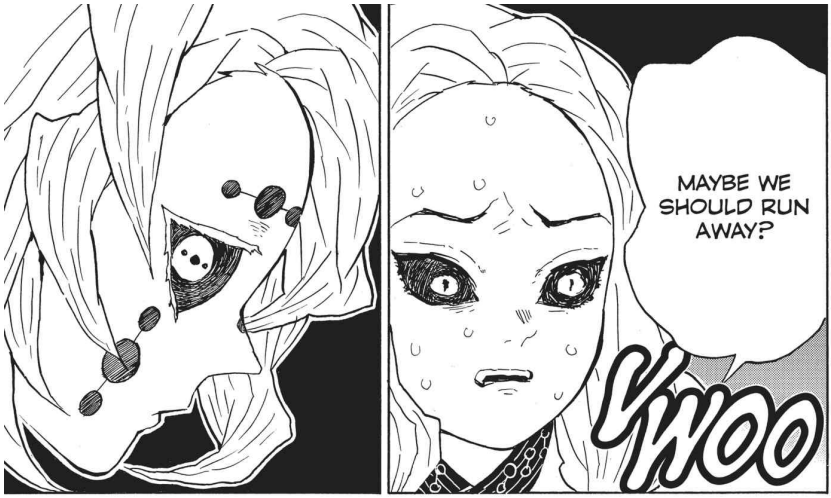

WE HAD NO REAL BLOOD TIES, BUT WE WERE ALL AFRAID OF DEMON SLAYERS...
...AND WE WANTED COMPANIONS.

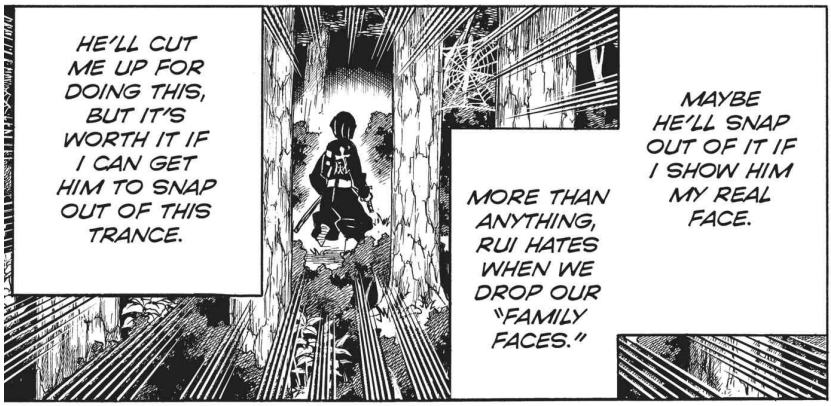

THE "MOTHER" OF OUR GROUP WAS A CHILD DEMON.
THE FIRST THING HE MADE US DO WAS CHANGE THE WAY WE LOOKED.
WE RESHAPED OUR FACES TO LOOK MORE LIKE RUI.

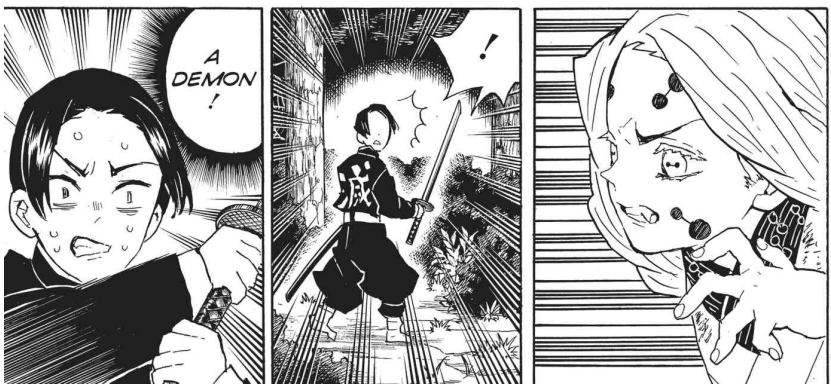

ALSO, SHE WASN'T GOOD AT TRANS-FORMING HER BODY AND FACE, SO SHE WAS PUNISHED EVERY DAY.
THIS KEPT HER FROM BEING GOOD AT PLAYING THE ROLE OF MOTHER.
SHE WAS SO YOUNG THAT SHE STILL HAD HER HUMAN MEMORIES AND SHE'D OFTEN WEEP.


...AND LEAVE THEM HANGING IN THE SUN-LIGHT.
HE'D CUT THEM, OR STEAL THEIR INTELLIGENCE, OR BIND THEM...
RUI PUNISHED ANYONE WHO DISOBEYED HIS ORDERS OR FAILED THEIR ROLE IN OUR FAMILY.
SO SAD.

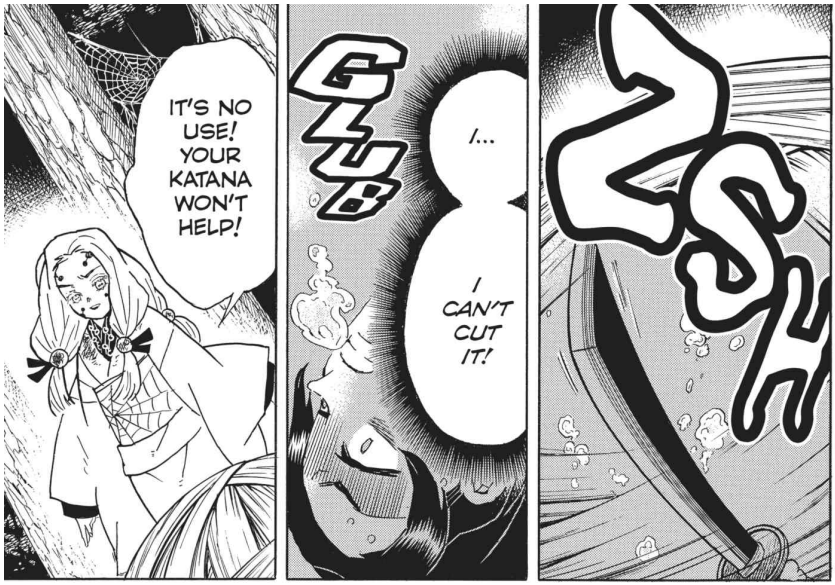

I ONLY EVER WORRIED ABOUT MYSELF.
THEY WERE DUMB, BUT I WAS DIFFERENT.
BUT NOW I'VE MESSED UP!
RUI ...
RUI!
THEY'VE BEATEN MOTHER! AND... AND...
... PROBABLY BIG BROTHER TOO!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO? THE DEMON SLAYERS ARE HERE! MORE OF THEM ARE ARRIVING!
...
HEY!
HEY...

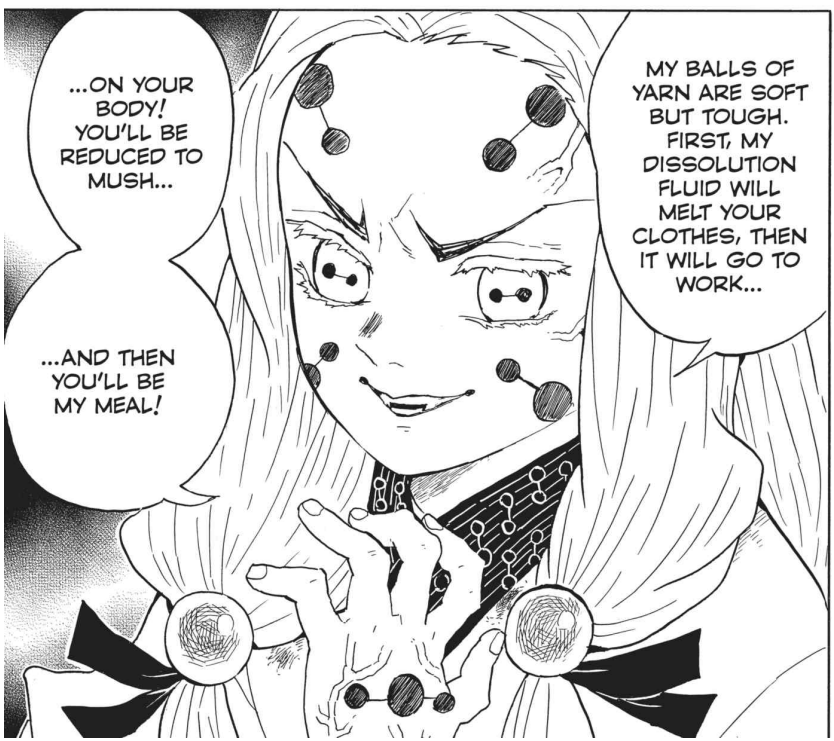

MAYBE WE SHOULD RUN AWAY?
YNOO

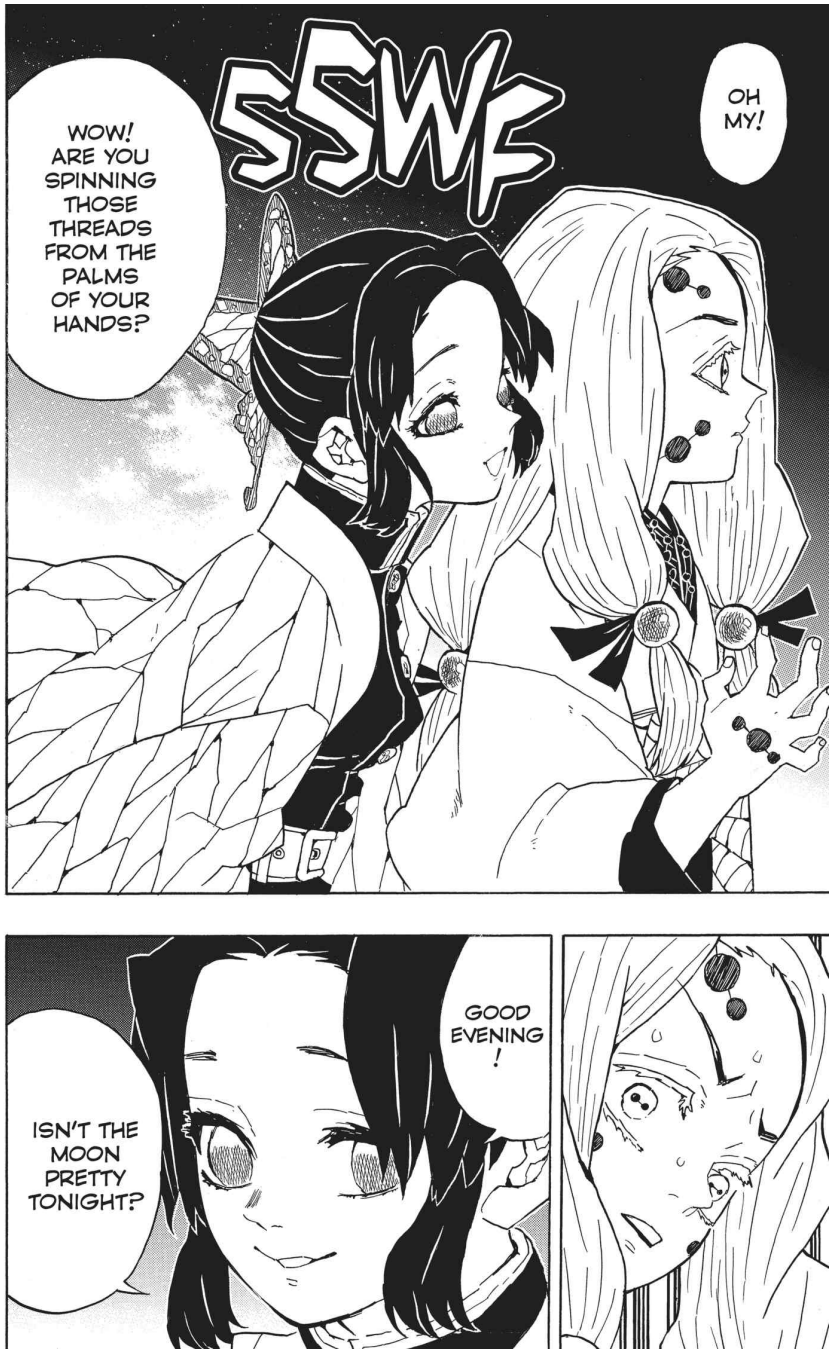

HE'LL CUT ME UP FOR DOING THIS, BUT IT'S WORTH IT IF I CAN GET HIM TO SNAP OUT OF THIS TRANCE.
MORE THAN ANYTHING, RUI HATES WHEN WE DROP OUR "FAMILY FACES."
MAYBE HE'LL SNAP OUT OF IT IF I SHOW HIM MY REAL FACE.


A DEMON!
!


WHS
ONE DOWN! GOOD!
SK
...!

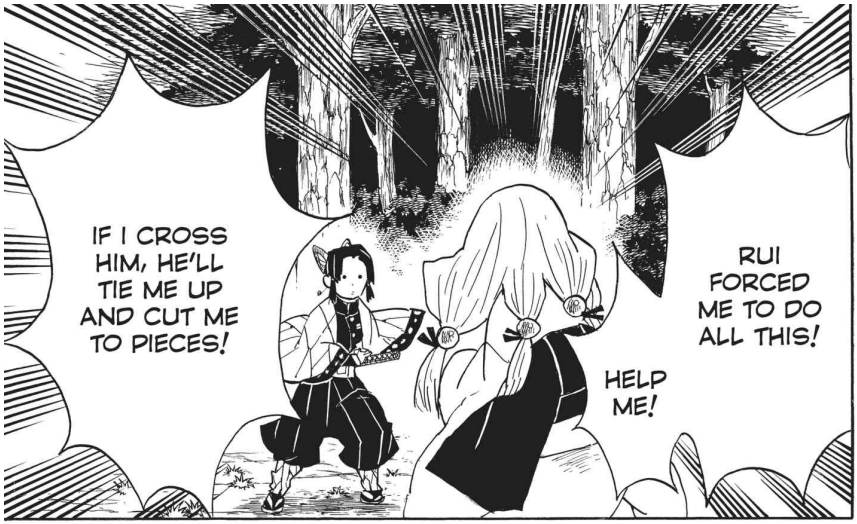

IT'S NO USE! YOUR KATANA WON'T HELP!
GLUB
I...
I CAN'T CUT IT!
NNNN

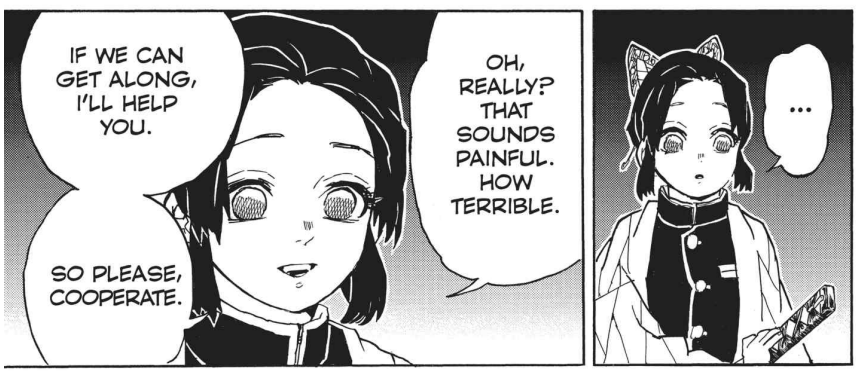

MY BALLS OF YARN ARE SOFT BUT TOUGH. FIRST, MY DISSOLUTION FLUID WILL MELT YOUR CLOTHES, THEN IT WILL GO TO WORK...
...ON YOUR BODY! YOU'LL BE REDUCED TO MUSH...
...AND THEN YOU'LL BE MY MEAL!


SSWF
WOW! ARE YOU SPINNING THOSE THREADS FROM THE PALMS OF YOUR HANDS?
OH MY!
ISN'T THE MOON PRETTY TONIGHT?
GOOD EVENING!


WHSH SWSH
!
SHE'S COMPLETELY AVOIDING MY SILK THREADS!
IT SEEMS LIKE...
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP


SHIVER
IT'S COLD, AND MAKES ME WANT TO CURL UP...
HER AURA IS SO STRONG, IT STOPPED MY BREATH... BUT IT'S DIFFERENT FROM RUI'S.
OH!
...LIKE DEATH IS AT MY SIDE.
...YOU DON'T WANT TO GET ALONG WITH ME.
WAIT! WAIT, PLEASE!


IF I CROSS HIM, HE'LL TIE ME UP AND CUT ME TO PIECES!
RUI FORCED ME TO DO ALL THIS!
HELP ME!


IF WE CAN GET ALONG, I'LL HELP YOU.
SO PLEASE, COOPERATE.
OH, REALLY? THAT SOUNDS PAINFUL. HOW TERRIBLE.
...


...I NEED TO KNOW A FEW THINGS ABOUT YOU FIRST.
SMILE
SURE!
BUT...
?!
UH...
YOU'LL HELP ME?